

at ambient temperatures but become deformable at the elevated temperatures experienced during metal teeming.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace all currently pending claims with the following complete set of pending claims:

CLEAN VERSION OF ALL PENDING CLAIMS

5, 1. (Amended) A refractory device (for use in the teeming of molten metal) comprising a ceramic pouring tube element 10, supported in a metallic can 11, in which a ceramic support element 12 is encapsulated and a shock-absorbing interface zone 13 between said metallic can 11 and the ceramic pouring tube element 10, in which zone there is provided a material the thermal properties of which are such that it is substantially solid at ambient temperatures but becomes deformable at elevated temperatures experienced during metal teeming.

2. A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the material selected for use in the interface zone 13 is structurally solid at temperatures up to about 700° C and becomes deformable without any appreciable chemical degradation at temperatures above about 700° C.

3. A refractory device according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the material providing the interface zone 13 comprises a pyroplastic ceramic material.

4. (Amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the interface zone 13 comprises a ceramic paste or bonding agent or additional structural ceramic element.

5. (Amended) A refractory device according to claim 3, wherein the pyroplastic material is a frittable composition applied over at least one co-operating assembly surfaces of the pouring tube element and the support element.

6. (Amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the ceramic support element 12 is fully encapsulated within the metallic can 11, and fits with and around the upper part of the pouring tube element 10 by virtue of said ceramic support 12 element having an internal profile corresponding sufficiently to the external profile of the pouring tube.

7. A refractory device according to claim 6, wherein the respective profiles are such as to provide corresponding interferences fits surfaces or otherwise matching.

8. (Amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the ceramic support element 12 is pre-formed from a ceramic material of low thermal conductivity, or formed *in situ* by a suitable casting operation.

9. (Amended) A refractory device according to claim 1, wherein the refractory device is finished to suit its intended purpose.

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